



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
TENNESSEE COUNCIL FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
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PHIL BREDESEN
Governor

VIRGINIA T. LODGE
Commissioner

**TCDHH COUNCIL MEETING
League for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
August 8, 2008**

Members Present: Paulette Melton (Vice Chair), Lordy Smith, Patti Bell, Assistant Commissioner Andrea Cooper, Laurie Pullins, Dana Hughes, Executive Director Thom Roberts, Kim Dance.

I. Welcome & Announcements & Introductions:

Meeting called to order at 9:05 a.m. by Paulette Melton. New council members were welcomed, and new center director, Sallie Hussey was welcomed. Congratulations to Thom Roberts for 7 years as TCDHH Executive Director.

II. Review of Previous meetings minutes

Lordy Smith: Made a motion to accept the minutes from February 8, 2008.
Patti Bell: Seconded the motion.

Paulette asked if there were corrections or additions to the May 16th minutes.
Laurie asked that her report be included in the February minutes.

Dana Hughes made a motion to accept the May minutes.
Kim Dance seconded the motion.

III. Division of Rehabilitation Report, Andrea Cooper, Assistant Commissioner (and Patti Bell, as proxy)

Division of Rehabilitation:

- There is good news about the waiting list. We have had a list for many years which included about 10,000 people. As of July 15, we released another 2,500 people. We still have another 5,000 left. There are about 2,000 left in PC2. This means if someone came in today and applied, and they were not in PC1, then they would go on the waiting list. We will serve everyone in PC2 who applied before December 31, 2006. There are several things we need to look at before we release more. We are moving slowly and cautiously.
- In April we sponsored 40 employees to attend a training conference here in Nashville. We sent 50 employees and 10 providers to the Mega Conference.
- UT received a \$500K grant to provide long distance VR online training, with emphasis on deafness, and we have some people who will be starting this fall.
- Interpreters rates have be increased. We are now paying \$47.00 an hour for certified and \$25.00 an hour for non-certified.

Staff Updates:

- Patti Bell introduced Lana Newton, who replaces Cathy Steger as the Division of Rehabilitation Deaf-Blind Specialist. Lana has been working with VR in the Chattanooga area. She has also had some training at the Helen Keller center. Lana will be meeting with some of our clients state-wide. There are 143 people listed on the VR Deaf-Blind list. 71 have clients have been employed successfully.

IV. Council Member Reports**Laurie Pullins:**

- I was appointed President of the Knoxville Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) for 2008 – 2009. Meetings are the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m., at Bearden United Methodist Church in Knoxville. I represented the chapter at the HLAA Convention in Reno, Nevada in June. The 2009 HLAA convention will be held at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville on June 18 – 21, 2009. Your support is needed. My email is ldpullins@aol.com if you can help.
- I am an online and email advocate for the CIHear, Cochlear, HLAA, and Hearing Journey forums. I assist deaf and hard of hearing persons locally by answering questions about auditory therapy, interpreters & transcribers, cochlear implants, medical procedures & evaluations, doctors, etc.

- I am supporting the UT Audiology and Speech Pathology program, which has been proposed for elimination by the UT President and Board of Trustees. I have written many emails and letters. You may visit www.saveutasp.org and write letters to the UT President and Board of Trustees regarding the proposed closure. Email may be sent to the UT Secretary at lhertz@utk.edu or you may send regular mail to: Board of Trustees, 719 Andy Holt Tower, Knoxville, TN 37960-0170.

Paulette Melton: No Report

Dana Hughes:

- I want to thank the Governor for appointing me to this council. It is hard, as a Consumer Representative, to speak for all of the Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing individuals in Tennessee since there are so many. At the next council meeting I will bring a plan for better advocacy as part of the 5-year planning project.
- I am concerned that many council members did not show up for our last meeting. What can we do to improve interest in our council?
- Congratulations to Lygia Williams with Mental Health and to Thom Roberts, Executive Director of TCDHH for working with the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network. We would like to see not only suicide prevention, but other services from Mental Health as well.
- Interpreter guidelines are still an issue. Inadequate interpreters are being hired to work with children in the classrooms. This is a form of discrimination. I propose we develop guidelines for hiring interpreters and present this at the next meeting.

Thom Roberts stated that Alan Mealka is working with the Tennessee School for the Deaf (TSD), along with Tina Prochaska, and recommends Dana contact them.

Lordy Smith:

- I am a Black Deaf Advocate and we are planning a workshop this fall. It is not only for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, and all others are welcome. I hope to have an exhibit.
- Our choir group is going to Chicago to sing.
- At a VR meeting in April we were excited to hear that more cases are being taken for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

V. Executive Director's Report, Thom Roberts:

May 19	Visited with the staff of JCIL-DHHS then toured Memphis Oral School
20	Visited with Deaf Connect of the Mid-South
28	Presented, "You Said What? Huh?" at Mega Conference

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| June | 9-11 | VR Counselors for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Training
-Featured Speaker: Wendy Lozynsky re. Mental Health Issues |
| | 12 | TSPN Mid-Cumberland Regional Meeting |
| | 13 | Disability Determination Services TTY and Relay Training |
| | 16 | Met with Sallie Hussey, new CEO of LDHH |
| | 28 | Attended Sorenson's workshop: "How to Manage Conflict, Confrontational Situations and "Difficult" Appointments/Calls" |
| July | 12 | Organized TSPN Mid-Cumberland's public awareness event at Sounds Baseball game. Spoke with some deaf regarding suicide prevention. |
| | 18 | Met with planning committee for the National Alliance of the Mentally Ill Tennessee Convention in Memphis regarding making their meeting accessible for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and the Deaf-Blind |
| | 18-19 | Attended the Tennessee Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf Annual Conference in Memphis. |

Dana stated that he had proposed that NAD should encourage insurance companies to pay for hearing aids.

Laurie stated that she had been lucky; in 1959 she was able to get a hearing aid. She believes that the earlier people can get hearing aids, the more productive they will be in society.

Dana asked if The Department of Mental Health knew the need for a mental health specialist for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing. Thom stated that yes, NAMI is aware of the need and The Department of Mental Health is who they reach out for when needed. Dana stated that the whole state of Tennessee needed to be aware of the situation, and that he was willing to lobby to make sure the legislature knows the need.

Kim Dance:

- There is an interpreter at Redbank High School that was given permission by the principal to discipline a Deaf student. Punishment included slapping. There was a witness, a Deaf aid, who saw it. It was reported to the teacher and she did NOTHING! I told the assistant to report what is going on. This is a human rights violation. The substitute teacher is Deaf and for no reason at all both substitute teachers lost their jobs. Also at TSD they do not allow physical contact but at Redbank they do allow physical contact and that is not right.
- There are many interpreters who can expressively sign but not receptively read the student. Example, there are some students who don't care about their education. There are other times when that is brought to an adult's attention and they just don't care. If you have non-certified interpreters, you need someone who is qualified to both sign and voice for the students.

- Kim: I feel like we hear the same ole stories over and over. I want changes and improvement.

Dana said they've been talking about setting up a sub-committee and found they need guidelines.

Paulette appointed Dana to do research and report his findings in November.

VI. Center Reports

Johnson City: www.frontierhealth.org *(Not present but read by Thom Roberts)*

- Hosted workshops with Jenny Lea cosmetology, with hopes that NETDA will sponsor future workshops.
- ASL 2 and 2a were completed by Caroline and Jessica.
- CCDHH received an upgrade in Sorenson equipment.
- CCDHH and NETDA were at the Covered Bridge Festival in Elizabethton.
- CCDHH attended workshops in the community which included Operation Lifesaver for railroad safety, Tetrick funeral homes for preplanning needs, community workshop on aging, and ASL 3 classes were completed by Jessica.
- Kelly has been working with the Heritage Baptist Church since 2006 and has been assisting with the adoption of a Deaf family of 10.
- CCDHH is working with NETDA and PIP printing to help in the production of NETDA's cookbook.

Knoxville: www.kcdtn.org

- KCD is celebrating their 32nd year and is doing well; partly because VR rates are up.
- KCD hosted the TDBA meeting and a conference call with the Nashville Deaf-Blind group.
- KCD averaged \$1100 per month in community interpreting for the 2008 calendar year, and is 6% ahead of 2007's interpreting service performance.
- KCD distributed over \$2500 in "compassion money" to needy families in 2008.
- The voucher rate for the Deaf-Blind community was raised from \$70 to \$90 per month.
- KCD-TDGA annual golf tournament is scheduled for September 26th at Three Ridges Golf Course.
- KCD and the Deaf community are hosting their first garage sale in October.
- Direct TV has chosen KCD for its weekly spotlight series "Home Town Heroes".

Chattanooga: www.partnershipfca.com (Not present but read by Thom Roberts)

- Welcome to our new Case Manager, Becky Herrington, who joined us in June. Becky will be our primary sign language instructor in the fall.
- We have created a new Interpreter/Mentor position in an effort to mentor ITP students and alleviate some of the fears they have/had about community interpreting. Studies show that, due to that fear of community, a large portion of ITP graduates go directly into the school system perpetuating the shortage of interpreters in the community. We have mentored several students from Tennessee Temple University. One student stated how happy she was that she was able to see what community interpreting was actually like and that this mentoring program helped her understand that she can do community interpreting. We hope to have several more students from the community and TTU in the fall.

Memphis: No Report.

Nashville: www.leagueforthedeaf.com

- LDHH is in the process of merging with the Ear Foundation, and will take on some of their programs.
- In a month or two, we hope to be able to offer scholarship and educational programs focused on hearing loss.
- LDHH is looking at some changes, including a move within the next year, but they are open to where the Deaf community wants them to go.

Jackson: www.j-cil.com

- JCIL held their workshop, “Language: It’s Phenomenal” in May, with 10 participants.
- JCIL has been busy working with and helping a deaf couple with their wedding preparation. The wedding was on June 7th, with 3 interpreters.
- Michele, staff interpreter, attended an Interpreting Boot Camp in Mississippi in June.
- A local company that has a Deaf staff member had a one-on-one sign language class.
- JCIL met with the Director of Nursing, and the nursing staff at Regional Hospital in Jackson to create awareness regarding the needs of Deaf individuals in a hospital setting.
- We met with the JCTAD committee regarding DAW, and have tickets for sale. DAW is September 20th.

Ilsa Schwarz: (Professor and head of the audiology and speech pathology department at UT, since 2002).

Our department has been proposed for closure. The department has a very large student/client population. Our clients are from infants to geriatric adults, and are coming from the Kentucky, Virginia and North Carolina borders. 60 – 65% of the children we serve are Tenn Care funded. We do not accept outside money.

The Dean does not think audiology and speech pathology belong in the studies, and is proposing closure of this department. You may contact the Governor with your concerns.

VII. State Report & Election

Council members were given a copy of the 2008 State Report to review.

Laurie made a motion to accept the report.

Kim seconded the motion.

The TCDHH 2008 State Report will be submitted to the Legislature on August 11, 2008.

Vote for Chair and Vice Chair: Council members elected Dana Hughes to be the Chair for the council, and Paulette Melton was elected to be Vice Chair.

VIII. Old Business and New Business:

Old Business:

Nominations: Thom welcomed the new members of the Council, and reminded everyone to look for people who would be interested in sitting on the Council. There will be one term expiring in the Spring. All nominations need to be submitted to Thom by December 1, 2008. At the present time, the council has no vacancies.

Bylaws: Laurie had no comments on the bylaws, as she didn't receive feedback from the last meeting. David Booker was working on the bylaws with Laurie but David is no longer on the Council. Dana asked Laurie to be looking for someone else to help with that.

Retreat: The retreat previously planned for August has been postponed until November 13th, at which time we will discuss the 5-year plan. The location has not yet been determined.

NewBusiness:

No new business was discussed.

IX. Announcements/Public Comments:

Mike Lozynsky, with GoAmerica demonstrated the new MVP (Mobile Video Phone), which is portable and has conference call capability. Mike Turner is the new contact person for GoAmerica.

Meeting adjourned by Vice Chair Paulette Melton at 12:00 p.m.